Second Quarter Regional Research Meeting: Northern Region, Ghana

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Through action research and development partnerships, Africa RISING will create opportunities for smallholder farm households to move out of hunger and poverty through sustainably intensified farming systems that improve food, nutrition, and income security, particularly for women and children, and conserve or enhance the natural resource base.

The three regional projects are led by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (in West Africa and East and Southern Africa) and the International Livestock Research Institute (in the Ethiopian Highlands). The International Food Policy Research Institute leads the program’s monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment. <http://africa-rising.net/>

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# Background

Africa RISING project in Ghana is a USAID government funded project led by International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA). It is a research project into sustainable intensification and integration of natural resources to improve productivity, nutrition, income security and reduce hunger and poverty in smallholder families especially children and women. The project is being implemented in the three northern regions of Ghana (Northern, Upper East and Upper West). In Northern Region the project is implemented in two districts, namely Tolon and Savelugu Districts. The project is implemented in five communities (Jana, Duko, Botingli, Tibali and Kpallung) in Savelugu Distirct and five communities (Cheyohi No. 2, Tingoli, Gbanjon, Tibogunayili and Kprim) in Tolon District.

# Regional Research Meetings

Africa RISING project Ghana organizes quarterly regional research meetings in the three northern regions. The objective of the meetings is to provide a platform for interaction among work research theme leaders, FBOs and other partners to foster integrated approach for implementing project activities.

# Highlights of Regional Research Meeting

The meeting was held on 15th June, 2016 at IITA conference hall in Tamale, Ghana. Participants included; research theme leaders, FBO members from all intervention communities, District Directors of Agriculture, and Research for Development (R4D) platform members.

## Meeting Objectives and Expected Outcomes

The key objective of the meeting was to provide a niche for interaction among research theme leaders and partners to foster collaborative approach in planning and implementing project activities. Specific objectives of the regional research meeting were to present:

1. Update and status of project implementation from April to June, 2016
2. Key implementing challenges and feasible measures taken
3. Achievements/successes
4. Further plans and road-map for the next quarter
5. Key anticipated achievements and challenges

The expected outcomes of the meeting were to:

1. Deliver update and status report for implementation of project activities
2. Identify challenges affecting implementation of project and possible solutions.
3. Propose activities for the next quarter.

## Meeting process

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Francis Neindow, Savelugu Municipal Director of Agriculture. The meeting started at exactly 9: 00 am with self-introduction of all the participants.

# Welcome Address by Regional Co-ordinator

Mr. Abdul Rahman (Northern Regional Coordinator for Africa RISING) welcomed all participants to the meeting. He expressed his gratitude to all participants for making the meeting possible. In his welcome address, he reiterated the objectives of the Africa RISING Ghana quarterly meeting. He said the objective of the meeting was to bring together stakeholders particularly team leaders to discuss progress of activities and to harmonize working packages. He also lauded the collaboration and synergy that is gradually growing among stakeholders and partners. He therefore enjoined stakeholder and partners to keep the harmony to foster integrated approach for implementing project activities.

# Improving Cereal-Legume Cropping System Trials in Northern Region

Mr. Abdul Rahman, Regional Coordinator for Africa RISING, made a presentation to update participants on status of activities on cereal-legume cropping systems in Northern Region. He started with plan of activities for the second quarter (April to June) which includes:

1. Preparation for 2016 season
2. Establishment of field trials
3. Training of farmers on good agronomic practices “GAP”

According to Mr. Abdul Rahman, the delay of the rains has dented plan of activities scheduled for the second quarter. As a result preparation for 2016 was the only activity accomplished during this quarter. He also talked about the list of trials for 2016 cropping season. He outlined the list of trials for 2016 season as follows:

1. Productivity of Maize-Cowpea strip cropping system
2. Productivity of Maize-Groundnut strip cropping system
3. Leaf stripping to optimize feed from maize-based cropping systems
4. Cowpea living mulch effects on intensive maize production
5. Effect of P fertilizer on groundnut production
6. Effect of spacing on groundnut production

He concluded his presentation by outlining the plan of activities for the next quarter. These include:

1. Establishment of field trials
2. Training of farmers on ‘GAP’
3. Crop-livestock training

# Socioeconomic studies on adoption monitoring of Africa RISING technologies

Dr. Bekele Kotu, an agricultural economist at IITA- Tamale gave a brief update on two (2) major activities of socio- economic studies. These include:

1. Monitoring adoption of Africa RISING Ghana technologies.
2. Evaluation of Africa RISING Ghana technologies.

According to him, monitoring adoption survey of Africa RISING Ghana technologies has been completed. Data entry and cleaning has also been completed. He added that data analysis and reporting have commenced. He further mentioned that excerpts of the report will be presented at workshops. He also added that abstracts of the study have been written to be presented at international conferences and symposium.

Dr. Kotu also talked about the second major activity, evaluation of Africa RISING Ghana technologies. According to him, socio- economic analysis of some Africa RISING Ghana technologies has been conducted. These technologies include:

1. Nitrogen fertilizer rate on maize production
2. Spraying regime on cowpea production
3. Integrated soil fertility management on soybean production
4. Cereal-legume strip cropping

He added that additional data such as farmer preference of the technologies, cost of production among other data will be collected to produce a comprehensive report of the study.

# Intensification of integrated crop-livestock systems in Northern Ghana

## a. Small Ruminant Feed and Health Intervention

Mr. Sadat Salifu, a research scientist at CSIR-Animal Research Institute gave an update of feed and health intervention in nine (9) communities in Northern, Upper East and Upper West Region. According to him vaccination program in Upper West Region has been completed. Sambolugu in the Upper East Region did not benefit from the vaccination exercise. He cited financial constraint as major cause that incapacitated vaccination of small ruminants at Sambolugu. He added that a total of 3430 animals have been vaccinated so far and the exercise is still in progress.

Mr. Salifu concluded his presentation by acknowledging plans to integrate forage crops (*Cajanus cajan* and *Bracharia alata*) in the technology pack during this 2016 cropping season.

## b. Conservation of Crop Residues

Dr. Addah Weseh, a lecturer from University for Development Studies made a presentation on crop residues conservation methods on growth performance of small ruminants in Northern Ghana. He mentioned drying, ensiling and chemical treatment as common methods of conserving crop residue. According to him, cassava peels and groundnut haulm were used for these studies and preliminary result on cassava peel is ready. He therefore gave a brief highlight about the cassava peel study.

He mentioned that cassava peels are utilized as ruminant feed by drying in Northern Region and the use of cassava peels as supplementary feed in ruminant is limited by the hydrogen cyanide concentration and poor quality of the product after drying. He added that drying of cassava peels reduces hydrogen cyanide concentration by 86% while fermentation (ensiling) reduces it by 96%. Therefore the objective of the study was to evaluate intake and growth of ruminant via dried cassava peels and ensiled cassava peels. According to him, dried cassava peels and ensiled cassava peels were supplied as supplementary feed from 8: 30am to 12: 30 pm GMT to nine communal sheep pen in botingli, Savelugu nanton district. Live body weight of animals was taken every two (2) weeks. Dried cassava peels and ensiled cassava peels samples were analyzed for pH, dry matter (DM), microbial analysis, lactic acid- producing bacteria, yeasts and mould. Results of the study showed that dry matter and pH of the dry cassava peels were significantly higher than that of ensiled cassava peels. However, lactic acid producing bacterial and mould were also found to significantly higher in ensiled cassava peels than dry cassava peels. However, there was no significant difference in the final body weight gain between animals fed with dried cassava peels and ensiled cassava peels.

He mentioned that the study will continue to ascertain which of the two (2) conservation methods has more economical advantage to smallholder resourced farmers.

He concluded by acknowledging the plans for the next quarter. These include:

1. Replication of the study in the other regions and communities.
2. Analysis of feed samples.
3. Completion of groundnut haulm experiment

# Report on Savelugu MoFA activities

Mr. Francis Abdulai Neindow, Savelugu Municipal Director of Agriculture gave an update of activities carried out during the month of April to June, 2016. The following were the major activities performed:

1. Validation of selected farmers for upscaling trials
2. Training of farmers on good agronomic activities “GAP”
3. Training on appropriate crop variety selection
4. Sensitization of farmers in the intervention communities about the changes in the project design in 2016 cropping season
5. Review and planning meeting in Blue Hills Hotel at Wa.

He mentioned challenges encountered during these activities as:

1. No rainfall since the beginning of June 2016 to date
2. Inadequate tractor services
3. Fuel allowances for March and April have not yet been paid

He concluded his presentation by mentioning plan of activities for the next quarter. These include:

1. Seed bed preparation
2. Field layout
3. Planting of trials and demonstration fields
4. Record keeping

# Report on Tolon MoFA activities

Mrs. Sylverline Mba, an AEA at Tolon Municipal Department of Agriculture gave an update on the status of activities performed from April to June, 2016 which include:

1. Farmer sensitization in three (3) communities.
2. Validation of selected farmers for upscaling.
3. Training of farmers on good agronomic practices.

She outlined some challenges encountered during these activities as:

1. No rainfall at the beginning of June 16, 2016.
2. Farmers dissatisfied about withdrawal of input (seed and fertilizer)

She concluded her presentation by stating the plans for the next quarter which includes:

1. Seedbed preparation
2. Field layout
3. Planting

# Report on Tolon R4D activities

Mr. Issah Abukari (R4D Treasurer) gave an update of activities carried out in the District. According to him, restructuring of the R4D platform was the major activity. According to him, the following were the major activities conducted:

1. Executive meeting at MoFA office to plan for general meeting and to make R4D viable.
2. General meeting to elect a facilitator
3. A visit to intervention communities, Tingoli, to sensitize farmers to cope with input (seed and fertilizer) withdrawal.

He concluded his presentation by mentioning the challenges confronting the platform. These include:

1. Delay in the onset of the rains
2. Source of fund aside IITA
3. Proper communication

# Report on Savelugu R4D activities

Mr. Mohammed Abdul Rahman, a member of Savelugu R4D gave a brief update of activities carried out from March to June, 2016. He mentioned the following activities performed during the period:

1. Meeting
2. Election of new members to strengthen R4D platform

He cited financial constraint as a major setback of the platform.

# Closing remarks

The chairman in his closing remarks thanked all the participants for their cooperation and immense contributions.

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# Annexes

**Annex 1:** List of Participants at 2nd quarter regional research meeting

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| S/N | Name | Title | INSTITUTION |
| 1 | Inusah Adam | Contact Person | Cheyohi |
| 2 | Fuseini A. Majeed | Contact Person | Tingoli |
| 3 | Abukari Abdul-Nasir | Contact Person | Gbanjong |
| 4 | Ahmed Issah | Contact Person | Jena |
| 5 | Ziblim Fuseini | Contact Person | Botingli |
| 6 | Nassam Mohammed | Contact Person | Kpalung |
| 7 | Issah Mohammed Saain | Contact Person | Duko |
| 8 | Yakubu Abdul Rahman | Contact Person | Tibali |
| 9 | Alhassan Fuseini | Contact Person | Tiborgunayili |
| 10 | Mbah Sylverline | Extension Officer | Dept of Agric. Tolon |
| 11 | Issah Abukari | R4d Representative | Tolon |
| 12 | Francis Abdulai Neindow | Director | Dept. of Agric. Savelugu |
| 13 | Mohammed Abdul Rahman | R4d Representative | Savelugu |
| 14 | Addah Weseh | Lecturer | UDS |
| 15 | Sadat Salifu | Research Scientist | CSIR-ARI |
| 16 | Bekele Kotu | Agric. Economist | IITA-Arica RISING |
| 17 | Abdul Rahman Nurudeen | Research Associate | IITA-Arica RISING |
| 18 | Mohammed Amisu | Research Supervisor | IITA-Arica RISING |
| 19 | Nancy Adobea Addo | Research Supervisor | IITA-Arica RISING |
| 20 | Dokurugu Fuseini | Research Assistant | IITA-Arica RISING |
| 21 | Arnold S. Amppah | Research Associate | IITA-N2Africa |
| 22 | Prince Kwesi Otabil | Research Associate | IITA-YIIFSWA |
| 23 | Albert Berdjour | Research Assistant | IITA-SARD-SC |
| 24 | Sumani W Dawuda | Field Technician | IITA |
| 25 | Seidu Mohammed | National Service Personnel | IITA |